

Student Work Readiness in Vocational High School

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ABSTRACT

The current study aimed at analysing the effect of internship and employability to work readiness of the students of SMK Negeri 1 Singaraja. Mixed-method was used as the method of the study, with sequential explanatory strategy. Initially, quantitative data analysis was performed, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis. The qualitative data collection and analysis were developed based on the quantitative results. Results of the study revealed that there was a significant effect of internship and employability to the students' work readiness.

Keywords: *Employability skill, Internship, Vocational high school, Work readiness*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the disruption era, the readiness of each country to survive and compete globally are demanded. Readiness, in every sector, of a country plays an important role in entering the era of globalization. Developing countries, such as Indonesia, need more complex preparations, compared to developed ones. The number of productive workforces makes Indonesia have more value in entering this era. Yet, unless well-managed and developed, the workforces will become a 'boomerang'. The work force, as Human Resource (HR), is an important aspect of a country that needs to be explored and developed to become human beings with superior skills [1]. Countries, with skilled labour human resource, will have the key to success in the economic sector [2]. In order to increase productivity in Indonesia, investment options to develop the quality of human resources as human capital in development are alternatives that must be prioritized. As a country capital, Indonesia's human resources should be superior, in terms of quality in addition to quantity, and the state is able to associate human capital with education [3].

Indonesia already has the advantage of quantity human capital [3]. Based on data released by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in February 2019, Indonesia has 196,462,765 working-age residents with 69% of this population being workforce. The data indicates that more than half of Indonesia's population is labour force. The workforce is a population over 15 years, or starting from high school age. Improving the quality of human capital, then, becomes mandatory, through increasing the quality of education. Education can be considered as

an investment, as well as consumption; or both [3]. One policy that has been taken by the government is adjusting the content of education and learning provided to students, especially at high school levels at Vocational High Schools (SMK). Based on Presidential Instruction (Inpres) No. 9 of 2016 concerning the revitalization of Vocational High Schools, in order to increase the quality and competitiveness of human resources, it is necessary to align the SMK curriculum in accordance with the demands of users.

SMK is operated under the Government Regulation No. 29 of 199, which is to carry out educational programs according to the type of the work field. With the issuance of the Inpres, the role of SMK as an educational institution that provides educated and trained workforce was emphasized, so that the curriculum used must also be in accordance with users' needs. SMK graduates, as potential labour force, will later be able to encourage macroeconomic growth and stimulate growth in other fields [2]. SMK, as a high school institution, aims at forming expert and skilful human resources [4]. One of the programs carried out at SMK is an apprenticeship program at school institutes known as '*Praktek Kerja Lapangan*' (hereinafter, *prakerin*). *Prakerin* is one program in SMK in collaboration with the business and enterprises to professional graduates competing in the labour market. All students who follow the learning process will go through a developmental stage, according to the stages of development. Students will face a thinking adjustment process to generate new ideas through assimilation and accommodation [5]. Since all schema developments are universal for all mankind, the

implication in education is that teachers cannot teach their students something unless readiness to maturity is achieved [6]. *Prakerin* provides working experiences for the students, preparing to increase the job readiness [7]. As a learning tool, *Prakerin* gives students an opportunity to directly apply theories and laboratory experiences into the work world. The internship program bridges the academia and the business world [8],[9]. Experience that will increase the employability. Employability is important in preparing students to become a reliable workforce. Reliable labour is an important aspect in a company which, if misused, becomes an influencing factor for the company [1]. By providing direct work experience, it can improve the employability of trainees [10].

The logical basis for conducting *prakerin* is the current changes of the business world and industry as well as the legal support for the implementation, namely the Keputusan Menteri Pendidikan dan Budaya dan Kebudayaan (Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture) No. 323/U/1997 concerning the implementation of vocational internship. Even with the legal support, the implementation of *prakerin* is highly dependent on the support of the business world and the industrial world. The more businesses and industries that exist around the school provide opportunities for schools to have apprentice partners who are able to provide a lot of experience, and vice versa. Likewise, the *prakerin* carried out by SMK Negeri 1 Singaraja, as one of the State Vocational Schools with business and management in Buleleng Regency, has carried out internship, even limited to to partners nearby, in Buleleng regency. This condition will certainly have an impact on the results of the internship program. It allows only limited work experience for the students. Based on the background, the researchers conducted a study on the effect of job training and employability of the job readiness of students of SMK Negeri 1 Singaraja.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. *Prakerin* (Internship)

Education has been considered as an effective way to overcome unemployment. In addition, education is also a way to improve the quality of the workforce. One of the education programs that can be carried out is the implementation of a curriculum that supports the creation of a quality workforce. Since 1990, Indonesian government has issued a policy of implementing internship at the SMK level, with the aim of improving the quality of the workforce. The implementation of apprenticeship is the implementation of the Dual System Education Model (PSG) which involves the business world and the industrial world. PSG is a vocational education task to prepare quality graduates, who have

competence, independence, work skills, who are able to open field businesses, work alone, and are able to adapt and compete [4]. Based on the internship guidebook issued by the Directorate of Vocational High School Development (DPSMK) in 2007, this program is a partnership program between partner and school organization.

In some literatures, industrial work practices or field work practices are often referred to as internships. Internships provide opportunities for business students to gain rewarding experiences by applying their concepts to real work environments [9]. The internship experience then impacts the professional growth and success of business students and helps them to receive good financial income at their first job.

2.2. *Employability Skills*

A good labour has expertise and is skilful. In addition to technical expertise, a labour needs non-technical expertise to support performance, known as employability skills. Communication skills, critical and analytical thinking, team work, problem-solving, self-management, business and customer awareness, taking initiative, leadership and managerial abilities, systems thinking, and work ethic are among suggested skills needed by the labour [11]. Namely communication skills, integrity skills, and self-confidence skills [10].

Previous studies have confirmed the effects of internship to employability skills [12],[13]. Following internship opens the opportunity for the students to have a job. In many instances, high performance students will directly be recruited by the internship partners. Some may be offered part time jobs [13]. The reason is simple. Instead of opening work applications that require time and resources, an organization would prefer to select an employee with known performance.

2.3. *Work Readiness*

The decision to recruit is closely related to the job readiness of the job seekers. Work readiness indicates the ability to adapt to the work environment. Work readiness is a relatively new concept that has emerged in the literature as a selection criterion for predicting potential graduates [14]. The work readiness shows the extent to which graduates are considered to have attitudes and attributes that make them ready or ready to succeed in the work environment. However, as a construct, job readiness is still in the early stages of development and there seems to be no clarity and consensus related to the definition of work readiness and the skills and attributes of the work readiness [15]. Yet, some experts have formulated work readiness scales to measure work readiness. Personal characteristics, organizational Personal characteristics,

organizational acumen, work competence, and social intelligence are used as the attribute [14].

Employability is an asset for an individual to work. Individual with employability has already three basic skills, namely communication skills, integrity skills and self-confidence skills [10]. Students with employability skills are ready to work, since they have practical skills needed by the employers.

3. METHOD

This study uses mixed method research, combining two approaches, quantitative and qualitative, simultaneously in the stages of the study [16]. This method uses sequential explanatory strategy; using quantitative in the first stage, followed by qualitative method in collecting and analysing the data, based on the result of the initial quantitative stage [17].

On the quantitative stage, survey was used as the method, distributing self-administered questionnaires. The respondents were the students of the accounting program at SMKN 1 Singaraja, who took the internship program. In the stage of data analysis, assuming the normality could not be achieved, the hypothesis was tested using ordinal regression analysis technique. The testing technique was used to examine the relationships among variables; the dependent variable was stratified categorical scale (such as Likert scale) with the normality assumption and homogeneity cannot be convincingly fulfilled. The research process was then continued to the qualitative stage, through interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) to obtain broader information and deeper understanding. Expectedly, the result would support the result of the data analysis of the quantitative stage.

The criteria for selecting informants are (1) willingness to become a respondent as stated in the form of interview availability, attached to the quantitative data collection questionnaire; (2) providing telephone numbers that can be contacted; and (3) confirming readiness by replying to the message sent through WhatsApp. The qualitative data was in the form of transcripts of the interviews. The data were then analysed descriptively by identifying the key words or main ideas conveyed by each informant regarding the research topic.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Student Work Readiness

Based on the results of the study, the work readiness variable, it was revealed that most of the students (52.8%) had work readiness, in the average category. Basically, the result showed that students who took education at SMK were ready to enter the world of

work. Measurement on the students’ work readiness was based on the four competences mentioned earlier in the instrument. In detail, the result of the work readiness can be seen in table 1.

4.2. Internship (prakerin)

The assessment of the implementation of *Prakerin*, which was carried out by the supervisor and the internship partners, showed that the majority of internship students had a score in the moderate category (63 %). This data shows that when the students performed well in accordance with the set procedure. Assuming that the assessment was carried out objectively by the assessors, the score was assumed as a true reflection of the students’ performance during the internship. Detailed data on the assessment of the internship can be seen in Table 2.

4.3. Students’ Employability Skills

The score of the student’s employability showed that 60.2% of the students were in the category of average. The SMK curriculum was developed to prepare the students to be skilful and competent as an employee. The majority condition is also a reflection of the heterogeneity of the sample. The detailed result of the employability could be seen in Table 3.

Table 1. Measurement of Student’s work readiness

| Category | Number | Percentage (%) |
|----------|--------|----------------|
| Low | 24 | 22,2 |
| Average | 57 | 52,8 |
| High | 27 | 25 |

Source: proceed research data

Table 2. measurement of the internship

| Category | Number | Percentage (%) |
|----------|--------|----------------|
| Low | 21 | 19,4 |
| Average | 68 | 63 |
| High | 19 | 17,6 |

Source: proceed research data

Table 3. measurement of employability skills

| Category | Number | Percentage (%) |
|----------|--------|----------------|
| Low | 31 | 28,7 |
| Average | 65 | 60,2 |
| High | 12 | 11,1 |

Source: proceed research data

Table 4. the analysis of the effect if internship to work readiness

| Model | -2 Log Likelihood | Chi-Square | Wald | df | Sig. |
|-------|-------------------|------------|------|----|------|
|-------|-------------------|------------|------|----|------|

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|---|-------|
| Intercept Only | 318,978 | | | | |
| Final | 310,720 | 8,258 | | 1 | 0,004 |
| Location Prakerin | | | 7,758 | 1 | 0,005 |

Source: proceed sereach data

Tabel 5. Employability skills to work readiness

| Model | -2 Log Likelihood | Chi-Square | Wald | df | Sig. |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|------------|--------|----|-------|
| Intercept Only | 297,493 | | | | |
| Final | 246,627 | 50,866 | | 1 | 0,000 |
| Location Employability Skills | | | 44,661 | 1 | 0,005 |

Source: proceed research data

4.4. The effects of internship to work readiness

Based on the result of the data analysis, assessing the effect of internship to work readiness, it was revealed that the model was accepted. Fitting information model on the result of the analysis showed a decreasing value of -2 log like hood, from 318.978 to 310.720. It indicated that the involvement of internship variable caused a decrease in the final value of the equation model with a significance level of 0.004. In line with these results, testing for parameter estimates showed a Wald value of 7.758 with a significance level of 0.005. In detail, the results of the analysis can be seen in Table 4.

Testing the regression model on the two analysis variables, statistically, the proposed equation model is acceptable. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is an influence of industrial work practices on student work readiness.

4.5. Effect of Employability Skills to Work Readiness

Based on the results of the analysis thorough testing the effect of employability skills on student work readiness, it reveals this equation model can be accepted. The fitting information model in the analysis results shows a decrease in the value of -2 log Likelihood from 297.493 to 246.627. This indicates that the involvement of the employability skills variable causes a decrease in the final value of the equation model with a significance level of 0.004. In line with these results, testing for parameter estimates showed a Wald value of 44.661 with a significance level of 0.000. In detail, the results of the analysis can be seen in Table 5.

Testing the regression model on the two analysis variables, statistically, the proposed equation model is

acceptable. Hence, it can be concluded that there is an effect of employability skills on students' job readiness.

4.6. The Effect of Internship and Employability Skills to Work Readiness

Based on the results of the analysis carried out to examine the effect of internship and employability skills on students' job readiness, it can be seen that this equation model can be accepted. The fitting information model in the analysis results shows a decrease in the value of -2 log Likelihood from 515.352 to 459.808. This indicates that the involvement of internship and employability skills variables cause a decrease in the final value of the equation model with a significance level of 0.000. In line with these results, the estimation parameter testing shows the value of the Wald variable internship of 4.628 with a significance level of 0.031, while the value of the Wald variable employability skills is 41.412 with a significance level of 0.000. In detail, the results of the analysis can be seen in Table 6.

Testing the regression model on all analysis variables, statistically, the proposed equation model is acceptable. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is an effect of industrial work practices and employability skills on student work readiness.

Table 6. Internship and employability skills to work readiness

| Model | -2 Log Likelihood | Chi-Square | Wald | df | Sig. |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|------------|--------|------|------|
| Intercept Only | 515.352 | | | | |
| Final | 459.808 | 55.544 | 2 | .000 | |
| Location Prakerin | | | 4.628 | 1 | .031 |
| Location Employability Skills | | | 41.412 | 1 | .000 |

Source: proceed research data

Prakerin is an important part of the curriculum structure applied at the secondary education level, especially Vocational High Schools (SMK). The basis for determining the implementation is to provide direct work experience in the job field that is in line with the chosen field of expertise. As part of the National Education System, vocational secondary education is education at the vocational secondary level prioritizing the development of students' abilities to be able to work in certain fields, adaptability in the work environment, seek for job opportunities and develop themselves in the future. Internship is carried out in the final semester for students of class XII. With careful planning, so that later the supervisor can apply it in the field in giving grades to participants. In its assessment, internship pays

attention to three basic attributes, including work ethic, attitudes, and social relationships. Work ethic, attitudes, and social relationships during the internship make additional competencies, along with the competence of their field of expertise. A labour must have a high work ethic, having a responsible attitude in carrying out his obligations and rights as an employee. Likewise, the attitude and interaction of social relations are manifestations of the maturity of a worker's personality. The essence of these three things will certainly make students a well-prepared labour with good personal characteristics, organizational acumen, work competence, and social intelligence.

The implementation of internship is closely related to the personal character of workers, intelligence in organizations, competence in the field of work, and social intelligence [14] and [18]. The growth of these characters may occur during the internship. The learning experience during internship is a concrete experience that can be felt and carried out by students. They, as workers in internship partner institutions, will slightly force the students to learn based on the gained experiences. Reference [19] which states that internship can enhance students' learning experience to become educated and trained workforce candidates. When participating in the internship, students will learn to become a person with good character, who has intelligence in the organization in order to increase competence in the field of expertise supported by good social intelligence.

Along with internship, students' employability skills can also be seen based on their job skills. Employability skills are the main indicators that a person can complete the task well. Moreover, currently, the challenge of the limited number of jobs is undeniable. A worker who has employability skills has more value than other workers. Even in the field of work requires an increase in competence that must be possessed by prospective workers. Competencies that must be possessed by students, as prospective workforce including independent learning, numeracy, team work, communication, creativity/innovation, self-management, planning and organizing time management and ICT skills problem solving [20]. The formation of these competencies certainly greatly supports the readiness of students as prospective workers entering the work world. Workers who are able to increase their competence through adaptation of independent learning experiences will have characters that will differentiate them from other workers.

Internships and employability skills play an important role in the realization of students with work readiness. This is in line with the mandate of implementing education in SMK, as an answer to the challenge of providing experts in business and industry [21]. Therefore, SMK needs to equip students with

knowledge-based, communication and technology-based competencies. With various approaches in designing internship and also paying attention to the competencies that will be built, it is very appropriate if the implementation of *prakerin* to be flexible with the needs of the business world and industry.

5. CONCUSSION

Based on the results of the research and analysis conducted, it can be concluded that internship affects vocational students' work readiness. In addition, employability skills have an effect on vocational students' work readiness. Similarly, internship and employability skills have an effect on work readiness of the vocational students.

It can be suggested that the implementation of internship in vocational high schools (SMK) should always consider the needs of the business world and industry. In addition, the internship assessment should also consider organizational competencies, facing the different organizational environments and behaviours. Competency formation for vocational students should be started early. The purpose is to provide good habituation, to shape the characters of the SMK students.

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